



ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS

Briefly

ABSTRACT

Davis introduced Spiritualists to a philosophy and science based on the observations of nature. He prepared the way for Spiritualism to develop. Here is a glimpse of what clairvoyance can offer.

Phillip Falcone
Spiritualism

Briefly

Andrew Jackson Davis introduced us to the Philosophy of Spiritualism. In our Basic Book, Davis is most known for being mesmerized and discovering his clairvoyant abilities, an entry in his journal, 'Brother, the good work has begun, behold, a living demonstration is born;' and developing the first Spiritualist Lyceum. While Davis was perplexed by the revelation given him 31 March 1848, it may have been in reference to the birth of Spiritualism. The event in Hydesville, New York was the first public demonstration of souls reaching out to us.

His first attempt at being mesmerized was through Professor Grimes in 1843,¹ which was somewhat of a failure. Davis was able to resist Grimes' commands, as were the rest of the party who had joined him. A few days later, about 1 December, Mr. William Levingston entered the family shoe store boasting of his exploits in mesmerism before inquiring if Davis had ever been mesmerized. After relating his experience, Levingston invited him to his house for another attempt, which was successful.² Mesmerism was attributed to his developing clairvoyance, however, he had previous experience with souls. At the age of 16, he heard a voice, or perhaps several, just as Socrates is recorded as claiming to be in contact with Divine voices.³

His first book, *Nature's Divine Revelations*, was developed through his early lectures, and became the foundation for his scientific and philosophical influence upon Spiritualism.⁴ During the 1850s, Roy Sunderland approached Davis and others to form a newspaper, *The Spiritual Philosopher*, which focused on Spiritualism.⁵ After living in Hartford Connecticut for a number of years, he and his wife moved to New York City in 1875, and along with Judge Edmonds, formed the New York Spiritual Association.⁶ The purpose was to propagate the science and philosophy of Spiritualism through lectures, writings, and the development of a library. Possibly during this time, he formed the first lyceum and his wife the first children's lyceum for Spiritualism.⁷

Our purpose is to introduce the experiences of Andrew Jackson Davis' clairvoyant observations as they relate to the transition of the soul. Spiritualism teaches a person's personality continues after

¹ (Davis, *The Magic Staff*, 1867)

² (Davis, 1867)

³ (*The Ancient Period*, 1998)

⁴ (Morita, 1995)

⁵ (Morita, 1995)

⁶ (Morita, 1995)

⁷ (Hardinge, 1870)

the disentanglement of the soul from formulated matter, or body. Defining the personality is difficult due to its complexities. However, we may safely assume it is a stable pattern of behaviors, thoughts, and emotions⁸ which may include beliefs.

Death and the Afterlife.

In 1911, Andrew Jackson Davis published a series of evening lectures about the Summer Land, a place for souls to gather. He begins by suggesting there are three classes of inquirers. The first are those who have prepared themselves for the exposure of spiritual truths. The second are those interested in the ideas and theories of these truths. The last are those who already know the answers, but their powers of perception fail to penetrate beyond themselves.⁹ We are familiar with each of these people and may even know where to place ourselves within this classification. What we would like share with you are some of his thoughts about the experience of death, and what we might expect.

Our first account is the dying experience or the exiting of the soul, though he tells us it is that of a rapid death, I suspect it to be contrary to the one experiencing the process. Having experienced a rapid fall and several events that would appear to have occurred in seconds to any bystander, I can assure you that to the one experiencing the event, there is no rapidity. All appears as though it were slow-motion, just as depicted on television. One might say we pull ourselves out of time, but time remains a constant and it is the perception that changes.

As a person begins to exit this life, he tells us a halo begins to form, but he fails to direct us to where it begins to form. The person may begin to feel a coldness in the feet, possibly the toes, which slowly travels upward. As this sensation moves towards the head, the halo slowly expands. When it reaches the heart, it may appear to swell. Today, this would seem reasonable. The heart is where our emotions are felt the most. During those emotions related to joy, happiness, excitement, etc., the heart rhythms are organized. When experiencing those emotions such as anger, hatred, frustration, etc., heart rhythms are disorganized.¹⁰ The effects of expressing or withholding our emotions are found in the heart. Choosing not to express hostility is believed to contribute to coronary heart disease, while suppression of anger may contribute to cancer.¹¹

⁸ (Laher, 1007)

⁹ (Davis, Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land, 1911)

¹⁰ (McCraty, 2009)

¹¹ (Olness, 1993)

The radiant light continues moving across the body, like the spirit of God moving across the waters in Genesis. During this process, he tells us the person is cognizant, aware of the changes taking place. This emanation of light continues until only the head is left within its glow. The brain is the last organ of the body to relinquish its hold on the soul.¹²

For Davis, the idea of this being a rapid death may be lost during his clairvoyant observations. While in a state conducive to such activity, time, in the same fashion as during meditation, may be experienced differently than when in a normal state of consciousness. We may easily assume three different vantage points related to the experience of time exist in his depiction. In this instance, as with similar experiences, there is the one having the experience, and the observer, only in this there are at least two observers. One observer is experiencing an altered state of consciousness, and the other in a normal state of consciousness. Both experience the passage of time differently.

Davis goes on to inform us that a sudden death is suspended. The event remains in its present course; however, I suspect the experience may not be quick and painless as many suggest. Having not experienced this, I can only relate what was brought to me by one who had such an experience. During a visitation in a dream state, one dying in an explosion expressed the sensation of feeling possibly thousands of needles. Earlier I had mentioned experiencing a rapid descent. With safety harness in place, I stepped off the top of an electrical pole. The experience of the descent was drawn out. What seemed like minutes was seconds. While plummeting, the grains of dirt and the veins of dried autumn leaves became distinct. When the safety rope took hold, it was as though I were yanked back into the proper flow of time as well as from the dive. Thus, I cannot assume a sudden death is experienced in the same fashion as others may observe.

We must keep in mind that Davis lived during the Civil War and may have visited those battle fields afterwards because another of his narratives is of those who experience dismemberment. One occasion, through clairvoyance, a soldier was seen flung into the air due to a cannon ball. While the body experienced the onslaught, he could see the soul or the light body high above, along with others. During this vision, he saw rays of light extending to those limbs that had been dismembered, drawing them back, restoring them once more.¹³ While this is not unusual to us, it is the manner of restoration one might find of interest. Wherever the body parts may have been, their light essence could be seen

¹² (Davis, Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land, 1911)

¹³ (Davis, Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land, 1911)

making its way home, even with amputation being sometime in the past. One can only imagine a halo of light extracting itself from flesh and bone, at last, free to return from whence it came.

The light body, I shall explain the term in a moment, ascends from the body of formulated matter, reshaping itself into a shining orb. This is something we have become familiar with and possibly expect. What was interesting was his telling of the formation of a face, much smaller than the face of a human. A thread is still connected to the body. When it breaks, a light penetrates the room. A calling draws the soul to a distant land.¹⁴ Perhaps the soul follows a magnetic stream as migrating birds might follow the magnetic streams of the earth. Many metaphysical and esoteric writings offer different theories, which we encourage you to investigate.

Before progressing, we would like to relate an experience. Being Spiritualists, I'm sure many of you have had similar experiences. A brother made his transition during the summer of 2021. The day before his transition, while visiting, I was privileged to witness a light body, presumably his, in the process of extracting itself. An umbilical cord extending from his navel was attached to what appeared to be a womb or an egg. Within was a form in the fetal position. One can only assume it was he. As to the rest of the process, I was not there to witness.

The journey to the Summer Land.

Davis has several books where he shares his responses to letters about Spiritualism. On one occasion was an inquiry of passage from the Earth plane to the Summer Land. His response was this, 'The passage from this sphere into the next is no more a change to the individual than a journey from America to England, excepting the almost complete emancipation consequent upon the change, from rudimental misdirection and earthly imperfections.'¹⁵

The realm of souls has been described by many, ranging from the Bible, to Swedenborg, to contemporary authors like James Redfield. There is no harm in this for such information often brings comfort and hope and possibly direction. The crime occurs when we build creeds upon them insisting all others are wrong,¹⁶ whether they are personal or institutional. What we shall consider, for the moment, are the views of Andrew Jackson Davis.

¹⁴ (Davis, Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land, 1911)

¹⁵ (Davis, The Great Harmonia; Being a Philosophical Revelation of the Natural, Spiritual, and Celestial Universe, 1851)

¹⁶ (Loveland, 1889)

Many of us have questions about the afterlife. Some of us dare to explore through clairvoyance while most are satisfied by the explorations and theories of others. There is nothing wrong with either line of inquiry. Davis tells us we should take the time to plan our excursions and eventual relocation to what he affectionately calls the *'Summer Land'* just as we would for any other trip or relocation. We should gather as much information as is required to build faith,¹⁷ to build trust. Thus, he dispenses with the notion of judgement from an All-Powerful God and introduces ourselves as the one passing judgement. His proposal is more in line with Egypt's portrayal of entrance into the *Beautiful West*. The departed is led by Anubis to stand before Osiris with Thoth ready to record the presentation.¹⁸ What does Thoth record? He records our memories which are weighed against an ostrich feather.¹⁹ While Davis' version is not quite so dramatic, the point remains the same. It is we who convict ourselves,²⁰ thus we should endeavor to be kind to our brothers and sisters.²¹

Summer Land is described as being incomparable to what we experience here. Suggesting words are inadequate, but we shall try. He begins with telling us there is no pollution in the air to cloud our vision. All that is before us is of a crisp essence. Rivers flow through this great realm fed by the various planets where life may yet be undiscovered by those of closed minds. These streams may be filled with our thoughts and emotions. All emptying into a great body of water.

In this realm are many who are not of our Earth that appear to have gathered here. This is a place of souls, regardless of the manner of their encasement. As old habits may have been brought along, many seek out those of like minds, often developing what might appear as segregated communities. Unlike those self-segregated communities of our societies, all are welcome, regardless of creed or ethnicity. Some have chosen to remain in these familiar surroundings, others choose to remain in memories, and others have chosen to follow the path of nature, continuing their progression.

Experience is premium in this realm. Those who were unable to benefit from the experience of being in formulated matter continue their growth through the nurturing of many Souls. Many colleges and universities exist from which to attend and continue one's growth. Some Spiritualists have written

¹⁷ (Davis, Views of Our Heavenly Home, 1878)

¹⁸ (Mackenzie, 1907)

¹⁹ (Mackenzie, 1907)

²⁰ (Davis, Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land, 1911)

²¹ (Doyle, 1975)

of immature souls attending circles, along with their physical siblings, as a means of continuing their growth.²²

What of those who embarked upon their journey following long suffering? There are sanitariums and hospitals where they are cared for.²³ We must keep in mind, it is not the light body that would be in need of care, but the mind. Beliefs are powerful creations and may not be easily released. As we have facilities to aid those with a disturbed mental condition, it seems proper that such places may exist to aid those having similar difficulties. They are not instantly endowed with wisdom and freedom,²⁴ for it would seem experience is needed. If Mind continues, if the personality continues, so might what they cling to. Davis tells us those who experience sudden death are cared for as they acclimate to their new environment.²⁵ Such is the case when we travel afar and are unfamiliar with the culture. We may seek guides to assist us. Why would it be any different there? Davis encourages us to gather as much information as possible to assist us in acclimatizing to the culture of Summer Land.

I would like to take a moment to share an experience. As mentioned earlier, a brother made his transition in the summer of 2021. Prior to his embarkation, a privilege had been granted me. A place had been prepared for him and was revealed. A place of solitude and contentment had been prepared. A single room apartment with his pets were there to greet him, along with a friend of his who came to greet me.

A parishioner who had a loved take their own life was comforted by these revelations from Davis. Another found comfort in what had been revealed to me. Many find strength from these disclosures of information.

For us to explore the Summer Land, Egypt's *Beautiful West*,²⁶ Heaven, or any other description of the realms of the afterlife, we must become our own Medium. If Mediumship is the communication with the Souls in the Summer Land, we should learn this skill. We must develop our clairvoyant abilities to explore these realms for ourselves. While there, we must become passersby, filled with wonderment. For myself, this is one of the roles of Spiritualism.

²² (Hardinge, 1870)

²³ (Davis, *Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land*, 1911)

²⁴ (Davis, *Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land*, 1911)

²⁵ (Davis, *Death and the After-Life: Eight Evening Lectures on the Summer-Land*, 1911)

²⁶ (The Trustees of the British Museum, 2010)

Andrew Jackson Davis and Clairvoyance

Davis first self-induced clairvoyant experience occurred sometime in May of 1847, while traveling to Hudson from New York.²⁷ Davis had become aware of the pronounced changes taking place within his psychic or mental abilities. When visiting a friend who was afflicted with a cancerous disease, he was drawn to initiate a healing. Passing into what he called his superior condition, or his clairvoyant state, he discovered he had consciously attained a more focused mental state than before. It was the first time he had such an experience, achieving the clairvoyant state of mind without the aid of an operator. He remained some time with his friend and was able to witness, for the first time, a soul disentangling itself from the body. The question remains, how did he attain the ability to place himself in a state of reception?

We know his first clairvoyant experience occurred in 1843, at the direction of Mr. Levingston. With Levingston's assistance, Davis served as a clairvoyant healer, offering prescriptions for the ill. For the longest time, Davis was unable to recall his clairvoyant explorations. They satisfied those who came to observe the spectacle, but for him there was naught.

Like so many of the Shaman of unwritten and written history, Davis began to experience an emotional crisis. Like King Arthur of legend, he sought something believed to have been lost or forgotten. In this state, he conferred with the voice that had guided him for so long and was rewarded with a vision. Not because he demanded, not because he desired it, but because he was open to it. The vision received was a flash of light and then an exact replica of a cane shown and given him by Galen, a soul he had encountered earlier. The cane was an exact replica but of light. Hastily, and without thought, he reached for it only to find darkness in its place. After a time, perhaps an hour, he offered supplication, requesting the cane. A vision once more revealed, 'Behold. Here is thy magic staff: under all circumstances, keep an even mind. Take it, try it, walk with it, talk with it, lean on it, believe on it, forever. *Under all circumstances, keep an even mind*, repeated Davis, then asked. 'Is that my cane, which I had lost or forgotten?' The reply was, Yes.

During the summer of 1844, after a clairvoyant session with his operator and providing services for the ill, and information for others, Dr. Maryatt came calling. As on earlier visits, he produced a cloudy white crystal resembling an egg. Accepting the object, Davis was instructed to gaze upon it in a dark room. Following the instructions, Davis gazed upon it. Nothing. The crystal remained as it was, then he

²⁷ (Davis, *The Magic Staff*, 1867)

noticed clouds separating, revealing a landscape, afterwards, a light emanated from it. Startled by the occurrence, Davis immediately returned it to Dr. Maryatt, who assured him there was no danger. Davis returned to his gazing. This was Davis' first experience with clairvoyance without an operator. It was nearly three years until he was able to completely place himself in the desired state.

Davis' experience with the crystal is a common one. Other authors have expressed the same occurrence as have many students. I had this experience during the mid-1980s when exploring the development of clairvoyance.

Conclusion

Andrew Jackson Davis became a clairvoyant through dedication, perseverance, and compassion for others. The voice that guided him may have loosened the door. Those sessions with manipulators or operators at first cracked the door open, allowing those fleeting moments of experience until that moment, filled with compassion for his friend, did the door fully open.

He has provided us with a bountiful collection from which to build a foundation in the philosophy of Spiritualism. Today, there are portions of his works that are out of date, but much of it remains relevant. He was called upon frequently to do investigations. Perhaps it was these investigations and experiences through clairvoyance that earned the respect of his peers. Many have described him as exceptional. Quite an accomplishment for a person who began his career with little to no education, and upon recognizing its value, perhaps through his mesmerized lectures, sought to become educated.

Andrew Jackson Davis is also referred to as the *John the Baptist* of Spiritualism. Like John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, Davis prepared the way for those souls in Summer Land to contact Margaret and Catherine Fox. We encourage you to explore the writings of Andrew Jackson Davis. Much of it is available through the Gutenberg Project, which is the preservation of out-of-print books. Other outlets exist such as Amazon and possibly the Morris Pratt Institute of the National Spiritualists Association of Churches. Perhaps you can persuade the Independent Spiritualist Association to make chapters available.

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